

2020 Census Operational Timeline

2020	Milestone or Operation	Description
January 21	First enumeration begins in Alaska	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham kicks off the 2020 Census in the remote Alaska Native village of Toksook Bay. First person and household counted in the nation's once-a-decade count.
March 12	Online and phone response begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online questionnaire and phone lines available in English and 12 additional languages.
March 12-20	Invitations to participate arrive by mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 95 percent of households receive an initial invitation to respond in the mail.¹ The invitation includes instructions for responding online and a phone number to call for help (in English and 12 additional languages²). Areas less likely to respond online will also receive a paper questionnaire. Households in select areas that require assistance in Spanish will receive an English/Spanish bilingual invitation.³
March 15-April 17	Update Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census workers hand-deliver invitations in areas where the majority of households may not receive mail at their home's physical location, including across all of Puerto Rico and in other areas recently affected by natural disasters. Invitations include a paper questionnaire, as well as instructions for responding online and a phone number to call for help. Census workers update the Census Bureau's address list when they drop off the invitations. This operation covers almost 5 percent of households.
March 16-April 30	Update Enumerate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers visit households in very remote areas to collect responses in person, instead of inviting them to respond online, by phone, or by mail. These areas include parts of northern Maine, southeast Alaska, and select American Indian areas that request to be counted in person. Less than 1 percent of households fall into this category. Census takers update the Census Bureau's address list during their visit.
March 16-24	Reminder letters arrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households receive reminder letters in the mail encouraging them to respond.
March 26-April 3	Reminder postcards arrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households that haven't responded yet receive a postcard reminding them to respond.
March 30-April 1	Service-Based Enumeration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers work with service providers to count people experiencing homelessness at emergency and transitional shelters, soup kitchens, and regularly scheduled mobile food van stops.
April 1	Census Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By law, April 1 is the reference date for the census. Include everyone who lives in your home on April 1 in your response, including children and newborn babies, immigrants, grandparents, and roommates.

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April 1	Census counts people outdoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers count people experiencing homelessness outdoors and at other pre-identified locations where they are known to sleep, such as parks, under highway systems, rest stops, and all-night businesses.
April 2–June 5	Group Quarters Enumeration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers count people living in group housing, such as college dorms, nursing homes, and prisons.
April 2–July 31	Coverage Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call center staff call some households to verify information submitted in census responses. If the household's response indicates that there may be some inconsistency with the guidelines about who to count, we may call to ensure no one is missed or double-counted.
April 8–16	Paper questionnaires and additional reminder letters arrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Households that haven't responded yet receive a paper questionnaire, with a reminder to respond online or by completing and mailing back the enclosed questionnaire.
April 9–May 4	Enumeration of Transitory Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers count people at transitory locations who do not usually live or stay at another place, such as campgrounds, recreational vehicle (RV) parks, marinas, and hotels.
April 9	Early Nonresponse Followup begins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers begin following up with households that haven't responded yet around some colleges and universities. By starting early, we can count households in areas with off-campus housing before the end of the spring semester when students may leave for another residence.
April 20–27	Final reminder postcards arrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final postcards remind households that haven't responded yet to respond online, by phone, or by mail.
May 13–July 31	Nonresponse Followup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census takers visit every household that has not already responded to make sure they are counted. Households can still respond online, by phone, or by mail.
July 31	Online and phone response ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The time to respond to the 2020 Census concludes.
By December 31	Deliver apportionment counts to the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Census Bureau delivers the first census results to the President and announces the total population count for the nation, each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. State totals determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

2021-2023	Milestone or Operation	Description
By April 1, 2021	Deliver redistricting counts to states	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Census Bureau provides local counts to each state, ahead of the public. The states use these counts to redraw legislative boundaries, including congressional districts.
Through 2023	Release additional statistics to public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Census Bureau releases additional state and local data on data.census.gov.

¹ More information about the mail strategy is available at <www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2019/contact-strategies-viewer.html>.

² See the 2020 Census Support for Languages fact sheet at <www.go.usa.gov/xdmGD>.

³ For more information about the bilingual invitations, see <www.census.gov/library/fact-sheets/2019/dec/respond-to-2020-census-spanish.html>.

⁴ For more information about how the 2020 Census counts group housing, see <www.go.usa.gov/xdmGb>.

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